

# Fact Sheet

Revised November 2011

## Instructions for Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Swab

1. Items to be used for collecting a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab:
  - Virus respiratory 6 pack (to be stored at room temperature prior to use) and contains:
    - specimen tube containing viral transport medium
    - flexible plastic NP swab (for sampling)
    - requisition form
    - sealable plastic biohazard bag
  - \*Gloves
  - \*Surgical mask
  - \*Eye protection or face shield
2. Procedure for collecting a nasopharyngeal swab:

### BEFORE SAMPLING:

- Obtain outbreak number from TPH investigator.
- Check expiry date on the side of the specimen tube to ensure that it has not expired.
- Label the specimen tube with the resident/patient information: last and first name, date of birth (DOB), date and time specimen collected and outbreak number. Specimens without a resident/patient name and DOB will **not** be processed.
- Complete the requisition form (see sample provided by TPH) with resident/patient last and first name, DOB, date and time of collection, outbreak number and test codes: V01, V29, V33, V34, V42, and EIA for Influenza A/B and RSV. In addition include: your facility contact person's name and phone number and the TPH investigator name and phone number.
- Ensure that boxed named "STAT" is ticked.

### SAMPLING:

- Perform hand hygiene.
- \*Put on mask, eye protection/face shield, gown and gloves.
- Resident's/patient's head should be inclined from vertical to about 70% or bed should be raised to a 45-degree angle.

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- Unwrap the NP swab (flexible plastic) swab using sterile technique and gently insert it into one nostril (insert approximately one-half the distance from the tip of the nose to the tip of the earlobe).
- Press the tip of the swab on the mucosal surface of the mid-inferior turbinate. Rub it back and forth about 5 times. Leave the swab in place for a few seconds to absorb material.
- Carefully withdraw the nasopharyngeal swab. Insert it into the specimen tube containing viral transport medium.
- Break excess plastic swab at the scored line on the swab shaft so that the plastic fits securely. Discard excess cut plastic.
- Close the specimen tube tightly using the original cap lid and agitate several times. Ensure that the tube's cap is well closed. The Public Health Laboratory (PHL) will **not** process leaking specimens.
- Place the specimen tube into the large plastic pouch of the biohazard plastic bag. Remove the blue adhesive strip and seal it closed. Fold the completed requisition in half and place in the outside pocket located behind the "Biohazard" symbol. Put the biohazard bag containing the specimen and requisition into a brown paper bag held by a 2<sup>nd</sup> healthcare worker to avoid the contamination of environmental surfaces/refrigerator.
- Refrigerate the specimen immediately (**Do Not Freeze**) after collection and arrange for specimen pickup and delivery to the PHL. Specimens should arrive at PHL as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after collection.
- Remove gloves. Perform hand hygiene.
- Remove eye protection. Perform hand hygiene.
- Remove mask. Perform hand hygiene.
- Discard PPE into appropriate container.
- Call TPH at (416) \_\_\_\_\_ to arrange pick-up of specimens.

\*Use of PPE: Refer to PIDAC *Preventing Febrile Respiratory Illnesses: Protecting Residents and Staff*, Reprint Mar 2008, see page 9 *Symptomatic Patients, Precautions point 3.7*

For more information on specimen collection refer to the Public Health Laboratories, *Specimen Collection Guide*, November 2011, available at <http://www.oahpp.ca/services/specimen-collection-guide.html>